

**76-5-106.5. Stalking -- Definitions -- Injunction -- Penalties.**

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Conviction" means:

- (i) a verdict or conviction;
- (ii) a plea of guilty or guilty and mentally ill;
- (iii) a plea of no contest; or
- (iv) the acceptance by the court of a plea in abeyance.

(b) "Course of conduct" means two or more acts directed at or toward a specific person, including:

(i) acts in which the actor follows, monitors, observes, photographs, surveils, threatens, or communicates to or about a person, or interferes with a person's property:

- (A) directly, indirectly, or through any third party; and
- (B) by any action, method, device, or means; or

(ii) when the actor engages in any of the following acts or causes someone else to engage in any of these acts:

- (A) approaches or confronts a person;
- (B) appears at the person's workplace or contacts the person's employer or coworkers;

(C) appears at a person's residence or contacts a person's neighbors, or enters property owned, leased, or occupied by a person;

(D) sends material by any means to the person or for the purpose of obtaining or disseminating information about or communicating with the person to a member of the person's family or household, employer, coworker, friend, or associate of the person;

(E) places an object on or delivers an object to property owned, leased, or occupied by a person, or to the person's place of employment with the intent that the object be delivered to the person; or

(F) uses a computer, the Internet, text messaging, or any other electronic means to commit an act that is a part of the course of conduct.

(c) "Immediate family" means a spouse, parent, child, sibling, or any other person who regularly resides in the household or who regularly resided in the household within the prior six months.

(d) "Emotional distress" means significant mental or psychological suffering, whether or not medical or other professional treatment or counseling is required.

(e) "Reasonable person" means a reasonable person in the victim's circumstances.

(f) "Stalking" means an offense as described in Subsection (2) or (3).

(g) "Text messaging" means a communication in the form of electronic text or one or more electronic images sent by the actor from a telephone or computer to another person's telephone or computer by addressing the communication to the recipient's telephone number.

(2) A person is guilty of stalking who intentionally or knowingly engages in a course of conduct directed at a specific person and knows or should know that the course of conduct would cause a reasonable person:

- (a) to fear for the person's own safety or the safety of a third person; or
- (b) to suffer other emotional distress.

(3) A person is guilty of stalking who intentionally or knowingly violates:

- (a) a stalking injunction issued pursuant to Title 77, Chapter 3a, Stalking Injunctions; or
- (b) a permanent criminal stalking injunction issued pursuant to this section.

(4) In any prosecution under this section, it is not a defense that the actor:

- (a) was not given actual notice that the course of conduct was unwanted; or
- (b) did not intend to cause the victim fear or other emotional distress.

(5) An offense of stalking may be prosecuted under this section in any jurisdiction where one or more of the acts that is part of the course of conduct was initiated or caused an effect on the victim.

(6) Stalking is a class A misdemeanor:

- (a) upon the offender's first violation of Subsection (2); or
- (b) if the offender violated a stalking injunction issued pursuant to Title 77, Chapter 3a, Stalking Injunctions.

(7) Stalking is a third degree felony if the offender:

- (a) has been previously convicted of an offense of stalking;
- (b) has been previously convicted in another jurisdiction of an offense that is substantially similar to the offense of stalking;
- (c) has been previously convicted of any felony offense in Utah or of any crime in another jurisdiction which if committed in Utah would be a felony, in which the victim of the stalking offense or a member of the victim's immediate family was also a victim of the previous felony offense;
- (d) violated a permanent criminal stalking injunction issued pursuant to Subsection (9); or
- (e) has been or is at the time of the offense a cohabitant, as defined in Section 78B-7-102, of the victim.

(8) Stalking is a second degree felony if the offender:

- (a) used a dangerous weapon as defined in Section 76-1-601 or used other means or force likely to produce death or serious bodily injury, in the commission of the crime of stalking;
- (b) has been previously convicted two or more times of the offense of stalking;
- (c) has been convicted two or more times in another jurisdiction or jurisdictions of offenses that are substantially similar to the offense of stalking;
- (d) has been convicted two or more times, in any combination, of offenses under Subsection (7)(a), (b), or (c);
- (e) has been previously convicted two or more times of felony offenses in Utah or of crimes in another jurisdiction or jurisdictions which, if committed in Utah, would be felonies, in which the victim of the stalking was also a victim of the previous felony offenses; or
- (f) has been previously convicted of an offense under Subsection (7)(d) or (e).

(9) (a) A conviction for stalking or a plea accepted by the court and held in abeyance for a period of time serves as an application for a permanent criminal stalking injunction limiting the contact between the defendant and the victim.

(b) A permanent criminal stalking injunction shall be issued by the court at the time of the conviction. The court shall give the defendant notice of the right to request a hearing.

(c) If the defendant requests a hearing under Subsection (9)(b), it shall be held at the time of the conviction unless the victim requests otherwise, or for good cause.

(d) If the conviction was entered in a justice court, a certified copy of the judgment and conviction or a certified copy of the court's order holding the plea in abeyance shall be filed by the victim in the district court as an application and request for a hearing for a permanent criminal stalking injunction.

(10) A permanent criminal stalking injunction shall be issued by the district court granting the following relief where appropriate:

(a) an order:

(i) restraining the defendant from entering the residence, property, school, or place of employment of the victim; and

(ii) requiring the defendant to stay away from the victim, except as provided in Subsection (11), and to stay away from any specified place that is named in the order and is frequented regularly by the victim;

(b) an order restraining the defendant from making contact with or regarding the victim, including an order forbidding the defendant from personally or through an agent initiating any communication, except as provided in Subsection (11), likely to cause annoyance or alarm to the victim, including personal, written, or telephone contact with or regarding the victim, with the victim's employers, employees, coworkers, friends, associates, or others with whom communication would be likely to cause annoyance or alarm to the victim; and

(c) any other orders the court considers necessary to protect the victim and members of the victim's immediate family or household.

(11) If the victim and defendant have minor children together, the court may consider provisions regarding the defendant's exercise of custody and parent-time rights while ensuring the safety of the victim and any minor children. If the court issues a permanent criminal stalking injunction, but declines to address custody and parent-time issues, a copy of the stalking injunction shall be filed in any action in which custody and parent-time issues are being considered and that court may modify the injunction to balance the parties' custody and parent-time rights.

(12) Except as provided in Subsection (11), a permanent criminal stalking injunction may be modified, dissolved, or dismissed only upon application of the victim to the court which granted the injunction.

(13) Notice of permanent criminal stalking injunctions issued pursuant to this section shall be sent by the court to the statewide warrants network or similar system.

(14) A permanent criminal stalking injunction issued pursuant to this section has effect statewide.

(15) (a) Violation of an injunction issued pursuant to this section constitutes a third degree felony offense of stalking under Subsection (7).

(b) Violations may be enforced in a civil action initiated by the stalking victim, a criminal action initiated by a prosecuting attorney, or both.

(16) This section does not preclude the filing of a criminal information for stalking based on the same act which is the basis for the violation of the stalking injunction issued pursuant to Title 77, Chapter 3a, Stalking Injunctions, or a permanent criminal stalking injunction.

Amended by Chapter 383, 2012 General Session